Committee on Information
Thirty-seventh Session
Statement Delivered by Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations
April 28, 2015

Mr. Chairperson,

Congratulations on your appointment and thank you for presiding over this session. Israel is committed to advancing the goals of the DPI and was proud to co-sponsor events surrounding World Autism Awareness Day earlier this month. We look forward to many more collaborative efforts in the future.

Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Cristina Gallach for her tireless work as Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

Mr. Chair,

The Judeo-Christian faiths believe that we were commanded to live in accordance with the Ten Commandments. In a 2006 speech, Hebrew University Professor Yehuda Bauer argued that we should live by three additional commandments:

1. Thou shall not be a victim.
2. Thou shall never be a bystander.
3. Thou shall not be a perpetrator.

Mr. Chair,

Thou shall not be a victim.

This year marks 70 years since the end of World War II and 70 years since the world created this institution to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and safeguard the message of “Never Again.”

In his remarks on the International Day of Commemoration for the Holocaust, Israel’s President Reuven Rivlin said:

“Never again is not just a pledge by the survivors, and not [just] a pledge by the world to the members of the Jewish People. Never again is, first and foremost, the very essence of this United Nations Organization, it is its mission, it is the primary and principal rationale for its existence.”

This past year has seen unprecedented levels of violent anti-Semitism worldwide. The United Nations must take its rightful place at the forefront of the battle to turn back this tide of hatred.

The UN’s action to date has been encouraging. Earlier this year, member states joined forces to call for an historic session of the General Assembly to send the message that the nations of the world are united in opposing bigotry and intolerance.

This landmark session concluded by issuing a joint statement from 50 countries calling for action to eradicate anti-Semitism and urging the DPI to organize a follow-up conference to the
2004 “Unlearning Intolerance” series. Israel looks forward to this important event and urges the DPI to bring this plan to fruition.

Mr. Chair,

Thou shall not be a bystander.

In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to designate every January 27 as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

The observance of this day honors the memory of those who perished and helps the UN transmit critical lessons about the dangers of hatred, racism, and xenophobia.

The same resolution called for the development of educational programs to teach future generations about the Holocaust. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the UN Holocaust Outreach Program.

Israel is encouraged by the important work that the program continues to perform, and the significant growth in the audiences that are reached, including new member states that are participating in programs for the first time.

Israel would like to express its deep appreciation to the DPI and its Director, Ms. Kimberly Mann, for their tireless efforts to advance Holocaust remembrance and education.

Mr. Chair,

Thou shall not be a perpetrator.

Israel remains deeply concerned about the DPI’s “Special Information Program on the Question of Palestine.” Since its inception, this information program has offered a narrative of our region that is biased and misleading.

Similarly, the UN Information System on the Question of Palestine or UNISPAL - while not a part of the DPI - is utilizing social media platforms to disseminate materials to promote anti-Israel messages. It is truly unfortunate to see scarce resources being devoted to a body that acts in contradiction to the UN’s values. We urge the DPI to work toward consolidating all political media platforms under one authority.

Holocaust survivor and Nobel Laureate, Elie Wiesel, once said “There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”

Circulating discriminatory materials under the banner of the United Nations is both an injustice to Israel and a blemish on this institution’s stated values of integrity and impartiality. Israel strongly protests this prejudice and calls on the DPI to strengthen its oversight role and ensure that all communications disseminated by UN bodies live up to the values of this organization.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.